

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for facilitating image retrieval, comprising the steps of:
2 querying a user as to at least one attribute of an image the user wishes to
3 retrieve;
4 receiving user responses; and
5 presenting at least one image to the user based upon the user response.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of querying a user comprises
2 posing a series of questions to the user and wherein the step of receiving the user
3 response comprises receiving separate responses to each posed question.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein at least one of the successive questions
2 depends upon the user response given to a previous question.

1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of eliminating
2 potential image matches in response to the received response.

1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of prompting the
2 user to identify at least one image attribute.

1 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of storing an
2 attribute association as image metadata in response to a user response to the
3 prompting of the user.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the user response to the prompting
2 comprises direct user selection of at least one presented image.

1 8. The method of claim 6, wherein the user response to the prompting
2 comprises user identification of at least one image attribute in at least one presented
3 image.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of analyzing
2 images for a recognizable image attribute.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of storing attribute
2 associations as image metadata based upon the analyzing of the images.

1 11. An image retrieval system, comprising:
2 means for querying a user as to attributes of an image the user wishes to
3 retrieve;
4 means for receiving user responses; and
5 means for presenting images to the user based upon the user responses.

1 12. The system of claim 11, further comprising means for prompting the
2 user to identify image attributes.

1 13. The system of claim 12, further comprising means for storing an
2 attribute association as image metadata in response to a user response to the
3 prompting of the user.

1 14. The system of claim 11, further comprising means for analyzing
2 images for a recognizable image attribute.

1 15. The system of claim 14, further comprising means for storing attribute
2 associations as image metadata based upon the analyzing of the images.

1 16. A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium,
2 comprising:

3 logic configured to generate questions for a user that are designed to elicit
4 responses as to attributes of an image the user wishes to retrieve;

5 logic configured to receive user responses; and

6 logic configured to determine which images may satisfy the user's retrieval
7 wishes.

1 17. The program of claim 16, further comprising logic configured to
2 prompt the user to identify image attributes.

1 18. The program of claim 17, further comprising logic configured to store
2 an attribute association as image metadata in response to a user response to the
3 prompting of the user.

1 19. The program of claim 16, further comprising logic configured to
2 analyze images for a recognizable image attribute.

1 20. The program of claim 19, further comprising logic configured to store
2 attribute associations as image metadata based upon the analyzing of the images.